Faith and Inspiration

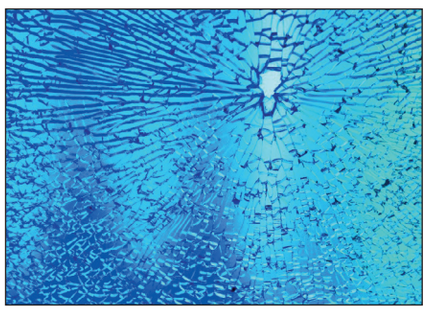
Through the Eyes of God

During a vacation bible school in my younger years, I witnessed and participated in a performance metaphor of our renewed lives as Christians.

First, we had a large glass jar filled with oil and holding a smaller jar. Due to the way light bent in the fluid of oil, the smaller jar was nigh invisible when looking at it from a front angle. Then we took a separate glass jar and shattered it to imply our broken selves, the reality of our sin and the life that we live before beginning a relationship with God through Christ.

Luke Marshburn
Homestead Mennonite Church

But we gathered up those broken pieces and dumped them in the oil. Once again, the nature of light through oil rendered the glass practically invisible, as if they had disappeared.



We pulled the small jar out of the oil, revealing the "repaired life" that comes after coming to Jesus. In the metaphor, the shattered jar had been made whole, crackless, without a blemish, just as we have been made whole in our relationship through our relationship with God.

I was a leader in this vacation bible school and performed this metaphor for a group of children who were awed by the magic of my sleight of hand, thinking that the broken glass truly had been repaired right before their eyes.

But from my vantage above the jar, the light hit it a different way; I watched the glass fragments settle in the oil. They were still there, not restored, not healed.

I questioned the lesson. Still question it, in fact. I've heard that through my relationship with God, it is as if my blemishes, my sins, are no more. If they were note cards in a filing cabinet, God's used white-out to erase the history of my errors. If they were cracks in a jar, God's fused me together, healed me, made me perfect. Sinless. Blameless.

From my vantage, that's far from the reality. I am well aware of my sinful nature, my continual shortcomings that prove I am certainly not sinless; if I see that my jar is spiderwebbed with cracks, why should I think that God can't? Has he blinded himself to the errors that I will inevitably make? That is the question that I must ask. Are we really whole already, or is that a misinterpretation of God's gift of salvation?

There are a few possible answers to this. For one, we may still be broken as evidenced by our continual sin. We are broken jars functioning in a broken world.

Rather than a willful blindness ignoring that, however, God may be completely conscious of our broken nature. After all, "we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17 NIV). God understands that we are far from perfect, yet works with us, revitalizing us to continue the journey, knowing that the end result is worth the effort. Perhaps, then, God has his sights set on what will be rather than what is? Instead of pretending these vessels aren't cracked, he realizes that they will be made whole eventually, our nature restored just as our relationship with him restores to a pre-sinful state. That is where he chooses focuses.

But a rebuttal: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:14-18 KJV).

Instead of accepting that we are still broken, it could be that God has, in fact, perfected us forever, and the proof of this is in our lack of blood sacrifices. Our sins are forgotten and his laws are written on our hearts; the broken glass has been mended, fused whole, and God no longer sees the cracks because they are no longer there. Not blind to them—they just don't exist. Our continuance of failing, our daily sins, must not be able to scratch that glass.

Or perhaps this is taking "perfected" out of a proper context, assuming "now and forever" to mean "finished and done." Rather, becoming perfect(-ed) now may be a process of perfect(-ing) now, in this moment, forever to be perfected as we constantly renew. That is, we may still be those cracked vessels being bonded together with God's aid and love, weathered and chipped by the rocks thrown by daily life yet continually healed—continually perfected—with each passing second growing closer to the complete wholeness promised. God sees the scars. He sees them healed. They exist, but he will not remember them.

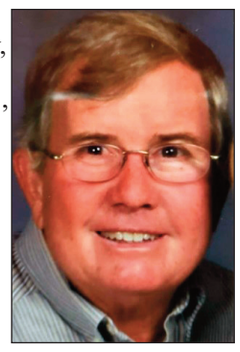
This isn't because he's blinded or looking ahead at what he knows will be, but because of our being perfected, the renewal constantly regenerates us.

That could, of course, be overthinking it. Our perfection and God's viewpoint may simply be another facet of the boundless God that goes far beyond the fathoms of my brain. Perhaps he does see us perfect, new in Christ, as we are, the glass made whole as if never shattered. If not blinded, then understanding some truth to existence that's outside of my grasp. I question it, find it difficult to comprehend, but there would be nothing wrong if that were the reality; if I could understand God completely, if he acted exactly as I expected and anticipated, then this very well may not be a God with whom I'm engaged, but a reflection of myself. It is good to acknowledge that God goes beyond our thoughts, hopes, and desires. It is okay to discover that we are wrong in our understanding of him.

In any case, this question is nothing to stake my faith on; a relationship is not a theology test, so while any of my hypotheses may be correct or may be far from the reality, the truth still stands: I am a new creation in Christ, somehow, in some way perfect(-ing? -ed?) and continually working towards a strong, healthy relationship with our lord and saviour. I am content with the fact that however God sees us, he sees us through love, and this broken vessel will be—may already be—made whole. Thank you, Lord.

OBITUARY

Charles Robert Fitch Jr.



Charles Robert Fitch Jr. (Chuck) passed away on Tuesday, July 19, 2022.

Chuck was born July 25, 1951, in Indianapolis, Indiana. His family moved to Florida in 1952.

Chuck was well known in the community as the owner and operator of Homestead Welding. His soft-spoken demeanor endeared him to all. As a businessman, he was always honest and fair. He loved his family and always put them before himself.

He is survived by his loving wife Rebecca (Becky), a sister Linda Wolf (Doug), and two brothers, Larry Fitch (Marilyn), Terry Fitch (Joni), and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Charles Fitch and Oneida Miles, and one sister, Carol Ives.

Donations in Chuck's memory can be sent to: Silver Palm United Methodist Church, 15855 SW 248th Street, Homestead, Florida 33031. (Memo - Chuck Fitch Memorial)

To submit an obituary or death notice, email wording and jpg photo to info@newsleadermail.com, 305-245-2311
Print deadline is Wednesday at noon.

Temple Hatikvah
Homestead Jewish Center
A Reform Congregation
183 NE 8th St., Homestead
For information please call
305-454-4944
or visit www.thhjc.org

Homestead VFW to Hold 2022 Freedom Walk

Honor Guard from Freedom Walk 2021 SDNL

By Charlie Hudson

There have always been days of such tragedy that everyone can recall exactly where they were and what they were doing when the specific event occurred. For earlier generations, it was news of the December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack. Almost exactly sixty years later, it was a beautiful morning September 11, 2001 when we reeled from news of the attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and the bravery of those on Flight 93 who sacrificed themselves to cause the fourth highjacked airplane to crash in a field in Pennsylvania instead of the other intended target in the capital.

Members of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary decided to establish the annual Freedom Walk in tribute to the 3,300 men, women, and children who were killed that day or perished during rescue attempts. In their words, "The Freedom Walk is a walk of remembrance and support; it is an event that allows the community to remember the victims of the September 11th 2001 attacks on the Pentagon, the Twin Towers and Flight 93 over Pennsylvania. It is also an opportunity for us to show our support to the first responders and the many men and women in uniform, past and present, who protect our freedom."

Registration will begin Saturday, September 10, 2021, at 9:00 a.m., at the VFW, 601 NE 2d Rd, Homestead. Participants will receive a "goody bag" and T-shirt as long as supplies last. The Field of Honor Dedication and Reflection Ceremony will take place at approximately 9:30 with the walk beginning immediately after. The route is about two miles and comes back to VFW Post 4127 for the Celebration of Freedom, a free lunch, music, a water slide, and other activities.

The Field of Honor is where flags are designated for active military, veterans, and first responders. Individuals or businesses/groups may sponsor a flag for $35 and the flags will be dedicated during the pre-walk ceremony. They will be on display for a month and can be picked up after October 10, 2022 by the donor.

Karen A. Browning, Freedom Walk Co-Chair and Senior Vice President, VFW Auxiliary 4127, has been coordinating with groups and organizations. "Besides representation from our military, police and fire departments, various troops from Boy Scouts of America, the Junior ROTC, the Young Marines, South Florida Trail Riders, Humana, and various local small business will be in attendance this year."

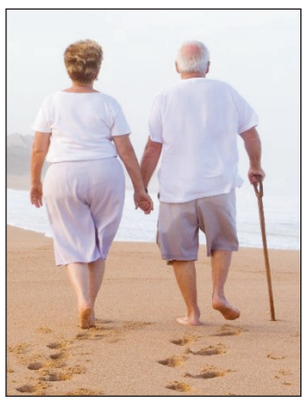
Many families choose to attend; some with parents pushing strollers along as other individuals carry American flags in commemoration.

Sponsorships for businesses, individuals, and organizations are available and help support the event as do donations. Any questions - vfw4127@yahoo.com or find VFW Post 4127 on Facebook. www.vfw.org/ Tel: (305) 245-4535.

Medicare and Social Security

Securing today and tomorrow

Question:
How does SSI work?
N. Palenzuela, Doral
Answer:
SSI is a Federal program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes). It provides monthly payments to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. The base monthly federal amount varies depending on your living arrangement and countable income. Not everyone gets the same amount. You may get more if you live in a state that adds money to the federal SSI payment. You may get less if you have other income such as wages, pensions, or Social Security benefits. You may also get less if someone pays your household expenses or if you live with a spouse and he or she has income. You may be able to get SSI if your resources are worth $2,000 or less. A couple may be able to get SSI if they have resources worth $3,000 or less.



Question:
Who is eligible for SSI?
S. Norris, Miami Gardens
Answer:
Anyone may apply for SSI. The SSI program provides monthly payments to people who:
- Are at least age 65 or blind or disabled.
- Have limited income (wages, pensions, etc.).
- Have limited resources (the things you own).
- Are U.S. citizens, nationals of the U.S., or some noncitizens.
- Reside in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands.

Exception: The children of military parent(s) assigned to permanent duty outside the U.S. and certain students temporarily abroad may receive SSI payments outside the U.S.

Question:
I am a US Citizen and I lost my Social Security card, what do I do?
P. Flores, Weston
Answer:
If you lost your card, you may not need a replacement. In most cases, simply knowing your Social Security number is enough. But if you do need a replacement, we make it easy. Once you complete your application (online or in-person), you will receive your Social Security card in the mail.

You must present original documents or copies certified by the agency that issued them. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies. All documents must be current (not expired). We cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document.

You may be able to request your replacement Social Security card online. Our online service is a fast and secure way to get a replacement. If you are age 18 or older with a U.S. mailing address and have a my Social Security account, you can apply for a replacement card online. For more information about creating my Social Security account and getting a replacement card online, visit our Social Security Number and Card website.

If you have not already established your U.S. citizenship with us, we need to see proof of U.S. citizenship. We can accept only certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include:
- U.S. passport;
- Certificate of Naturalization (N-550/N-570);
- Certificate of Citizenship (N-560/N-561);
- Certificate of Report of Birth (DS-1350);
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (FS-240, CRBA).

We can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information (date of birth or age) and preferably a recent photograph. For example, as proof of identity Social Security must see your:
- U.S. driver's license;
- State-issued non-driver identification card; or
- U.S. passport.

LESLI BURKHEAD
305-282-9603
List your home with me = SOLD
Call for a free property analysis.
The Keyes Company
Call a DEPENDABLE Hometown Realtor that will work hard for you when you're buying or selling!
Now's the Time to Buy or Sell
Market is Hot!
FOR THE BEST RESULTS STAY WITH THE BEST!!